

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8708

INFO AMCONSUL BELIZE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

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USCINCSO

S E C R E T GUATEMALA 5959

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, GT, BH, UK

SUBJ: BELIZE-VISIT OF SIR IVOR RICHARD TO GUATEMALA

1. BRITISH CONSUL MCQUILLAN CALLED ON AMBASSADOR AT MIDDAY OCT 27, FILLED HIM IN ON BRIEF VISIT OF UKUN REP IVOR RICHARD, ACCOMPANIED BY RICHARDSON, TO GUATEMALA FROM SUNDAY AFTERNOON, OCT 26 TO MONDAY MORNING, OCT 27 AND AT REQUEST OF RICHARD SHOWED AMBASSADOR COPY OF UK REPORTING TELEGRAM. WE UNDERSTAND RICHARD INTENDS TO GIVE FULL BRIEFING TO USUN SO WE WILL NOT ATTEMPT TO REPORT SUBSTANCE IN DETAIL FROM HERE.

2. ACCORDING TO MCQUILLAN, VISIT TOOK SHAPE FOLLOWING TELEPHONE CALL FROM RICHARD AROUND NOON ON SAT, OCT 25. FORTUNATELY, EVEN THOUGH IT WAS WEEKEND, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO REACH FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA QUICKLY. MOLINA WELCOMED THE VISIT. ALTHOUGH IT WAS AGREED TO AVOID PUBLICITY AND THAT ONLY SKINNER-KLEE AND MCQUILLAN WOULD MEET RICHARD AT AIRPORT ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, IN FACT SKINNER-KLEE, AYCINENA, SANCHEZ AND AN OFFICER FROM PROTOCOL TURNED UP ALONG WITH MCQUILLAN, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN A DEAD GIVEAWAY HAD PRESS TAKEN NOTE WHICH THEY DID NOT. SAME GROUP, PLUS FOREIGN MINISTER MOLINA, MET LATER IN THE EVENING AT BRITISH

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CONSUL'S RESIDENCE AT MOLINA'S INSISTENCE. RICHARD AND MOLINA

HAD PRIVATE HALF HOUR TALK BEFORE CALLING IN THE OTHERS FOR GENERAL DISCUSSION. FOLLOWING THE TALKS, FOREIGN MINISTER UNEXPECTEDLY INVITED THE ENTIRE GROUP TO DINNER AS HIS GUESTS AT ONE OF THE BEST KNOWN RESTAURANTS IN GUATEMALA CITY. MIRACULOUSLY, RICHARD AND RICHARDSON, WHO WERE PRESENTED AS A DISTINGUISHED VISITING ARCHAEOLOGIST AND HIS ASST, WERE NOT IDENTIFIED OR OTHERWISE SPOTTED BY PRESS OR GUATEMALAN POLITICAL FIGURES.

3. TALKS WERE CHARACTERIZED AS FRANK, DIRECT AND BUSINESSLIKE BUT NOT BITTER OR UNFRIENDLY. MOLINA AND SKINNER-KLEE IN PARTICULAR MADE AN EXCELLENT IMPRESSION ON THE BRITISH, EXPLAINING CALMLY AND REASONABLY WHY THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON BELIZE WAS UNACCEPTABLE

TO GUATEMALA, ESPECIALLY THE REFERENCES TO SELF-DETERMINATION AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY FOR BELIZE AND THE NARROW RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. ONLY AYCINENA WAS PEDANTIC AND DIFFICULT THROUGHOUT THE EVENING TO THE VISIBLE ANNOYANCE OF HIS COLLEAGUES.

4. AT ONE POINT AYCINENA TOLD RICHARD THAT IF HE HAD COME TO GUATEMALA TO "SELL" THE BELIZE DRAFT HE MIGHT AS WELL NOT HAVE COME. RICHARD REPLIED HE HAD NOT COME TO "SELL" ANYTHING BUT TO EXPLAIN THE UK BELIEF THAT A RESOLUTION ON BELIZE WAS INEVITABLE, THAT IT WAS NOT POLITICALLY POSSIBLE TO MAKE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN THE DRAFT TO ACCOMMODATE GUATEMALA, AND THAT THE UK WANTED TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS AFTER THE UN SESSION WITH A VIEW TO RESOLVING THE BELIZE PROBLEM IN 1976. AT THE END OF THE EVENING, ON THE SAME SUBJECT, MOLINA REPORTEDLY SAID THAT IF NEGOTIATIONS WERE TO RESUME AFTER THE UNGA (AND BY IMPLICATION ESPECIALLY AFTER THE PASSAGE OF A RESOLUTION ALONG THE LINES OF THE UK DRAFT) IT WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE UK FIRST TO MAKE SOME GESTURE TOWARD GUATEMALA. RICHARD WARNED THAT HE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO MAKE A SPEECH IN THE UN ON THE BELIZE PROBLEM BUT PROMISED HE WOULD TRY TO BE AS HELPFUL TO GUATEMALA AS POSSIBLE IN ORDER TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR GUATEMALA TO CONTINUE NEGOTIATIONS. SKINNER-KLEE, IN TURN, WARNED RICHARD THAT HE, SKINNER-KLEE, WOULD ALSO BE OBLIGED TO SPEAK IN THE UN ON THE PROBLEM AND THAT HIS SPEECH OF NECESSITY MUST BE FULL OF FIREWORKS AND NATIONALISM.

5. COMMENT: RICHARD'S VISIT WAS AN EXTREMELY FORTUNATE AND
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HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT. FIRST, THE GESTURE OF THE UK PERMANENT REP IN THE UN IN TAKING THE INITIATIVE AND THE TROUBLE TO SEEK OUT THE GUATEMALAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND TO FLY TO GUATEMALA TO DO SO WAS BADLY NEEDED JUST AT THIS TIME AND MUCH APPRECIATED. SECOND, BOTH SIDES WERE ABLE TO REACH A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF EACH OTHER'S POSITIONS, AND RICHARD, ESPECIALLY, WENT AWAY WITH A NEW AWARENESS OF THE POLITICAL PRESSURES AND IMPERATIVES UNDER WHICH THE GUATEMALANS ARE OPERATING. AND

THIRD, BY PLACING THE EMPHASIS NOT ON THE UN RESOLUTION BUT ON
SUBSEQUENT NEGOTIATIONS, WHICH RICHARD IMPLIED COULD BE MORE
FLEXIBLE THAN SUGGESTED BY A LIBERAL INTERPRETATION OF THE DRAFT
RESOLUTION, RICHARD HAS IMPROVED THE PROSPECTS FOR AVOIDING
AN EXPLOSION FROM GUATEMALA.

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